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WOMAN'S RIGHTS.

A STRICTLY

ORIGINAL COMEDY

IN

THREE ACTS,

BY

SYLVAN DREY

OF THE BALTIMORE BAR.

BALTIMORE:
1882.

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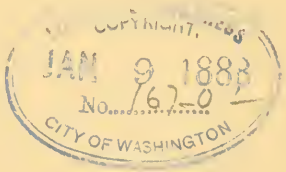

BALTIMORE:
1882.

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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Miss Mary Talker, President of the Massachusetts Woman's Rights Association and an Attorney-at-law.

Mr. Alexander Alonzo Blunderbuss Sheephead, a Senator opposed to Woman's Rights and an Attorney-at-law.

Miss Roscoana Conkling, a Political Aspirant.

Miss Hamiltonia Bliss, a Medical Aspirant.

Miss Benjina Butler, a Legal Aspirant.

Mr. Frank Adams,
Mr. Samuel Washington,
Mr. George Holbrook,
} Woman's Rights Commission.

Mr. John Quincy Brown, President of the Massachusetts Senate.

Mrs. Starr Morose, a Much-troubled Mother.

Miss May Morose, a Faithless Sweetheart.

Dr. Samuel Brosius.

Mr. Robert Green, a Foppish Law Student.

Miss Sue Grayson,
Miss Mag. Grayson,
} Clerks in Miss Talker's Law Office.

Members of the Woman's Rights Association, of Senate, etc.

Act I.—Convention of the Massachusetts Woman's Rights Association.

(Several months elapse between Act I and Act II.)

Act II.—Interior View of Miss Mary Talker's Law Office.

Act III.—Legal Consultation at Mrs. Starr Morose's House.

WOMAN'S RIGHTS.

A COMEDY.

ACT I.

SCENE.—*Interior view of the Capitol at Boston, Mass., representing the hall in which the members of the Massachusetts State Legislature convene.*

In the rear of the hall is a stand, resembling an altar, and behind the same is a large arm-chair resting on a raised platform, occupied by the President of the Massachusetts Woman's Rights Association. Two rows of chairs, twenty-five in each row, arranged in a semicircle, are occupied by fifty women, all of whom wear dark-blue goggles. Five of them are supposed to be from 18 *to* 22 *years of age; the rest from* 30 *to* 60 *years of age. To the left of the President are three vacant chairs, subsequently to be occupied by the Woman's Rights Commission. The hall is otherwise suitably furnished. When the curtain rises, the President calls the meeting to order.*

Miss Mary Talker [*spiritedly*]. My patient, much-abused, down-trodden and enthralled sisters [*striking the table violently with her hand*], we have convened here this evening to discharge a solemn duty which we owe not only to ourselves, but to all posterity. The notorious manner in which the obvious rights of women have been trampled upon has at last called forth your righteous indignation, and scattered seeds of discontent in every household in this broad land. "Woman's Rights" is the burning question of the day—the all-absorbing topic of the hour. Indeed, I firmly believe that it is destined to become a party issue in national politics. [*A short pause.*] My sisters, it is for you to determine how long you propose to submit to the tyrannical domination of your incommensurably selfish husbands. No doubt, if this question were put to any one of the myriads of society girls who are annually thrown upon the matrimonial market, they would answer with incredible unanimity, "We will submit to the tyrannical domination of a husband so long as we can procure one." Ah! [*sighing*], my sisters, it cuts me to the very quick to think that woman has fallen so low. It was not always thus. [*Triumphantly*]—There was a time when man sought woman. [*Despondently*]—But alas! alas! that was long ago, in the days of Adam, before woman was born. Strange indeed is the fatality, that it should rest upon the women of the nineteenth century to call into life the unborn virtue of pre-Adamite woman! But we must accept the inevitable. Let us revolt, *en masse*, against the present regime of husbands. If the "boss system" should not be tolerated in the management of political campaigns, why should it prevail in the regulation of domestic affairs? I need hardly stop to detail the sufferings of married women. Most of you have experienced the tyranny of a husband; the rest will not be slow to embrace an opportunity when it presents itself. In passing, however, let me warn the younger

members of this Convention (though I confess they do not form a very formidable number) to beware of the fatal institution of marriage. It takes but a very few years to change the veritable sugar of cooing times into the sourest vinegar ever manufactured. In my case this chemical operation was performed in so short a space that I did not even have time to change my maiden name. History repeats itself; the cause of my divorce and the cause of the Republican defeat in Ohio last fall are identical—it was prohibition. Pardon the digression; but when I was engaged to be married I made my ex-husband promise that he would abstain entirely from drinking any spirituous liquors whatever. About ten days after our marriage he brought home a bottle of whiskey. As he entered the front-door he accidentally let the bottle fall; the odor ascended rapidly (for all good things ascend) until it reached the third story, where *I* happened to be at the time. As quickly as the odor ascended, so quickly did I descend; upon finding my ex-husband trembling from head to foot with a broken bottle in his hand, I forthwith dismissed him. Believe me that such violent measures as these (especially when the wife is the daughter of a millionaire) are calculated to do more good to the cause of temperance than ten thousand "Salvation Armies."

But to revert to our subject—we have for a long time been shut out from all the lucrative pursuits of life. The right to practice medicine has long been denied us, and this too in face of the fact that out of all the numerous male doctors in existence, there is not *one* who could not command enormous commissions as an agent for an ambitious grave-digger. We dare not become lawyers, yet there are thousands of men who have been admitted to the *bar* who should be behind the *bars*. We dare not become judges, yet there are hundreds of men who sit on the *bench* who should be in the *cell*. Only recently I heard a political demagogue say that women were not qualified to occupy seats in Congress, because they are not sufficiently versed in the corrupt practices necessary to constitute a good Congressman. My sisters, I need hardly say that these objections are utterly absurd. No one enters the political arena now-a-days, who does not soon acquire that proficiency in the art of corruption which seems indispensably requisite to a pure politician. Here, as everywhere, "Experience is the best teacher." Look at the career of the Republican party! We need not, therefore, attempt to refute such specious arguments. It is not by idle words, but by immediate action, that we can hope to remove the disabilities under which we are laboring. We must worry our husbands in private life—that is those of us who are fortunate enough to possess any—and we must tantalize them in public till they accede to our demands. [*A short pause.*] At the request of some of our members I have sent a petition to the Massachusetts Legislature, whose President has so kindly loaned us the use of this hall, setting forth our views upon the subject of Woman's Rights. The Secretary of State writes as follows concerning the fate of the petition [*takes out a paper and reads*]:

To Miss Mary Talker and others:

The following resolution was passed last Saturday, in reference to your petition, by both houses of the General Assembly: Whereas, *The women of this State have petitioned this Assembly to remove the disabilities under which they are at present laboring.* Be it Resolved, *That a committee of three be appointed, to be known as the "Woman's Rights Commission," whose duty it shall be to examine a number of the members of the "Massachusetts Woman's Rights Association," in*

politics, law, medicine, etc., in order to determine whether or not the proposed change in the law regulating the rights of women is feasible. All applicants must be ready for examination to-night, as the Legislature adjourns in two weeks.

Yours respectfully,

Secretary of State.

My sisters, the Commission waits without, and before inviting them in, it will be necessary to ascertain who of you are willing to stand the examination which the Commission proposes to hold.

Miss Roscoana Conkling [*arising*]. My name is Roscoana Conkling. I present myself for examination in the science of politics. [*Miss Mary Talker takes down the names as each candidate announces herself.*]

Miss Hamiltonia Bliss [*arising*]. My name is Hamiltonia Bliss. I present myself for examination in the science of medicine.

Miss Benjina Butler [*arising*]. My name is Benjina Butler. I present myself for examination in the science of law.

Miss Talmadgina Beecher [*arising*]. My name is Talmadgina Beecher. I present myself for examination in theology.

Mrs. Garretta Jewetta Vanderbilt [*arising*]. My name is Garretta Jewetta Vanderbilt. I offer myself for examination as a railroad president.

Miss Jane Gould [*arising*]. My name is Jane Gould. I wish to be examined as a railroad and telegraph consolidator.

Mrs. Angella Bergh [*arising*]. My name is Angella Bergh. I present myself for examination on such subjects as are essential to qualify me to hold the position of President of the "Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals."

Miss Mary Talker. The sergeant-at-arms will please inform the Commission that we are ready to receive them.

[*The sergeant-at-arms leaves room, immediately re-entering, followed by three gentlemen dressed like Senators. Each holds a large sheet of paper in his hand, containing the questions to be asked the candidates. They occupy the three vacant chairs next to the President, the Chairman of the Commission occupying the chair nearest the President.*]

Miss Mary Talker [*to the Chairman of the Commission*]. Mr. Chairman, the resolution passed by the General Assembly has been laid before our Association, and in pursuance of its provisions I herewith present to you a list of those who will stand the proposed examinations. [*She hands him a paper containing the names of those who are to be examined, and the subjects in which they are to be examined.*]

Mr. Frank Adams [*Chairman of the Commission*]. Miss Roscoana Conkling: Politics. [*Miss Conkling arises.*] Miss Conkling, are politics a science or an art?

Miss R. Conkling. Politics are neither an art nor a science, for a science teaches us how to *know*, an art how to *do*, while politics teaches how to *take*.

Mr. Adams. What is the cardinal distinction between the Republicans and Democrats?

Miss Conkling. The Republicans are in power; the Democrats would like to be.

Mr. Adams. What sort of political platform would you frame at a Democratic Convention?

Miss Conkling. We recommend free education; we denounce political assessments; we favor civil service reform; we condemn monopolies; we demand a free ballot and a fair count.

Mr. Adams. How would you alter this to suit a Republican Convention?

Miss Conkling. I would not alter it at all.

Mr. Adams. Why do you make no allusions to "Free Trade" and "Total Abstinence" in your platform?

Miss Conkling. A shrewd political candidate never expresses an opinion on either "Free Trade" or "Prohibition."

Mr. Adams. What is the test of a good political platform?

Miss Conkling. That it is vague enough to meet the views of all political parties.

Mr. Adams. Do you believe in rotation in office or tenure for life?

Miss Conkling. That depends entirely upon circumstances. When I am an *officeholder* I believe in tenure for life; when I am an *office-seeker* I believe in rotation in office.

Mr. Adams. If you are elected as a United States Senator to represent Massachusetts, and the President refuses to consult you before making nominations to fill the vacant federal offices in Massachusetts, of what political offence is he guilty?

Miss Conkling. He offends against "Senatorial courtesy."

Mr. Adams. What is the remedy?

Miss Conkling. To resign and try to be re-elected.

Mr. Adams. That will suffice. The next on the list is Miss Hamiltonia Bliss: Medicine. [*Miss Bliss arises.*]

Mr. Samuel Washington [*the second member of the Commission*]. State the fundamental principle upon which the science of medicine is based.

Miss Bliss. Whenever a patient dies, death must be ascribed to the will of Providence; whenever he is cured, the cure is the effect of the medicine.

Mr. Washington. Can medicine be called a science? If so, why?

Miss Bliss. It can. The test of a science is the absolute certainty that one thing invariably follows another. Now the fundamental principles of medicine will stand this test. We know, for example, that whenever a doctor pays you a visit, an expensive bill will always follow; so scientific indeed is this principle, that even if he kills the patient the bill is nevertheless forthcoming. We also know that laudanum, arsenic, etc., will kill a patient when taken in sufficiently large doses; that cucumbers will cause the cramps; that when life is extinct, the patient is dead. The absolute certainty of these results makes medicine an exact science.

Mr. Washington. When a physician does not know the nature of his patient's complaint, how should he conceal his ignorance?

Miss Bliss. By telling the patient he is suffering with malaria.

Mr. Washington. To what other sciences is medicine closely allied?

Miss Bliss. To coffin-making and grave-digging.

Mr. Washington. What is the real object of administering medicine to the sick?

Miss Bliss. To keep the proprietors of apothecary stores alive.

Mr. Washington. What is the essential difference between homœopathic and allopathic treatment?

Miss Bliss. Homœopaths give small doses so that they can do no harm; allopaths give large doses so that the patient may be led to suppose that the medicine does him some good.

Mr. Washington. That will do.

Mr. Adams [*arising*]. The next on the list is Miss Benjina Butler: Law. [*He sits down again; Miss Butler arises.*]

Mr. George Holbrook [*the third member of the Commission*]. Define marriage.

Miss Butler. Marriage is an agreement made between a man and a woman, whereby the man, in consideration of a sufficient sum of money owned by the woman, allies himself to her.

Mr. Holbrook. How does the law regard a married woman's will?

Miss Butler. As a command, the disobedience of which will cause her husband no little unhappiness.

Mr. Holbrook. What is the general effect of a wife's will upon her husband's powers?

Miss Butler. The universal rule is that it reduces him to entire submission.

Mr. Holbrook. To what extent, at present, may married women contract?

Miss Butler. They have unlimited power to contract for necessaries, but the authorities are all agreed that they cannot *contract* expenses.

Mr. Holbrook. How can you prove a marriage?

Miss Butler. By the financial depression of the imputed husband.

Mr. Holbrook. Mention a good cause for divorce.

Miss Butler. Marriage.

Mr. Holbrook. That will do.

Mr. Adams [*arising*]. Miss President and Ladies: As the hour at which the two houses meet here this evening to consider the report of the committee is fast approaching, we will be compelled to forego the pleasure of examining any more of the applicants whose names are affixed to this list. The very admirable manner in which the three young ladies just examined have acquitted themselves, amply justifies us in concluding that you are entitled to have your existing disabilities removed. I know I express the sentiments of this Commission when I assert that we are in duty bound to submit a report highly favorable to the cause of "Woman's Rights." If you will, therefore, grant us the use of this hall for the rest of the evening, we may succeed in persuading the Legislature to enact such laws as may be necessary to insure your absolute equality with the male sex. I must not omit to say, Miss President, that the Legislature has authorized this Commission to invite you to address the General Assembly in behalf of your reform movement. Any other member of your Association who may so desire is likewise cordially invited to attend.

Miss Talker [*arising*]. Mr. Chairman: I am sure this Association feels more than gratified at the praise which you have so kindly bestowed upon its members. In return for your kindness we can only heartily thank you for your efforts in our behalf. In accordance with your request,—unless some of the members object—[*she looks around the room*], I now declare this meeting adjourned.

[*The members of the Association disperse, the orchestra playing an appropriate air. After the lapse of a few moments, the members of the Massachusetts Legislature slowly enter from the opposite side; some of*

them appear to be conversing as they enter. The three vacant chairs near the President's chair are to be occupied by Miss Mary Talker and two other members of the Woman's Rights Association. When the members are all seated the music ceases, and the President calls the meeting to order].

Mr. John Quincy Brown [*President of the Massachusetts Senate*]. Gentlemen, as you are aware, we meet here this evening to consider the feasibility of adopting such legislation as may be necessary to insure a proper recognition of woman's rights. The Committee appointed last week to investigate the matter have completed their labors, and will now give us the results of their investigations.

Mr. Adams [*arising*]. Mr. President: Your Committee appointed to test the justice of the claims set forth by the Massachusetts Woman's Rights Association has been so pressed for time that they have not been able to submit to this Assembly a written report. This was hardly necessary, however, since they are all of the unanimous opinion that your honorable body ought to pass such laws as will secure to women the right to engage in any profession, occupation, etc., etc., which is now open to man.

One of the members. I move the report be adopted.

Another member. Second the motion.

Mr. Brown. It has been moved and seconded that this report be adopted. The question is now open for debate.

Mr. Alexander A. B. Sheephead [*arising*]. Mr. President and gentlemen: I am religiously, morally, intellectually, physically and bitterly opposed to this motion. The glowing report which has been submitted to this Assembly by the Woman's Rights Commission is significant of the mighty influences which female charms and graces can exert over susceptible men. Mr. President, I shall not mince my words. I boldly assert that the winsome smiles of fifty-one women, the bright lustre of one hundred and two eyes has had a telling effect on the report of this Committee. In saying this, I do not wish to be understood as attaching any blame to the honorable gentlemen who constitute this Committee, for who could resist such irresistible influences? It was on this account, Mr. President, that I opposed this scheme, from its very incipiency, as wholly impracticable. The report of the Committee is, therefore, no surprise to me, but I confess my disappointment at the hasty manner in which this Assembly is seeking to rush through this ill-considered project. Gentlemen, I beg of you to pause and reflect before taking so dangerous a step. Recollect that you are the representatives of men. Recollect that you owe the lucrative positions which you occupy to Republican votes. Have you any idea what the universal extension of the right of suffrage to women means? It simply means that the Republicans will be summarily dismounted from the high political eminence on which they have heretofore stood in national politics. Already the atmosphere is impregnated with Democratic success. You all know that the popular vote of this country is Democratic; but thanks to the political foresight and sagacity of our ancestors, thanks to the providential contrivance of things, the electoral system has long saved this country from a Democratic President. If, however, married women are to be permitted to vote, is it not plain that our political prestige will be forever buried under the ground? Let not Massachusetts establish such a dangerous precedent. Women, Mr. President, are famous for their quick intuition, and I do not believe I exaggerate

when I state that their object in pressing the question of "Woman Suffrage" is the salutary effect which they know it will have upon marriage. It will increase their chances of matrimony tenfold; everywhere Republicans and Democrats will send out missionaries to impress upon the rising generation of young voters the necessity of marrying early and often. Indeed, nothing is clearer than that it will convert this country into one vast veritable Utah: the motto of the voter will be, "So many wives, so many votes." Moreover, this right to control the votes of women is a powerful incentive to corruption, and we cannot afford to lend a hand to corruption when reform movements are cropping up all around us. [*A short pause.*] Recollect, gentlemen, that you are husbands—married men. Personal experience has taught you that all politicians are not gentlemen. "Ward roughs," I assure you, are not the most appropriate associates for your wives and daughters. The man who will administer a sound thrashing to his political opponent, will not be prone to dance attendance upon his opponent's wife; and for a woman to have any connection with rings and machines is enough to shock the feelings of a brute. But aside from the morality of this question, think of the great inconvenience inevitably consequent upon such a social revolution. Mark you, the servant-girl question is becoming more and more complex every day. You all have noticed their conspicuous absence from your households. Like the evening shadows upon the wall they come and go—only they do not tarry so long. At present you can afford to listen undisturbed to your wife's complaints over the sudden evanescence of these domestic treasures Why? Because, despite Bridget's or Susan's dissatisfaction with your wife's behavior, the old love, which your courting days inspired in your breasts, still continues to linger in the lap of your heart, so long as she herself attends to the cooking. But woe to you when she comes to dabble in politics or "go down town on business." Then, gentlemen, you will be told to attend to your own household duties, and you, sirs, will never be able to procure a servant-girl, for things have come to such a pass that servants require recommendations from their employers—now who ever heard of a Congressman or Senator with a good recommendation? [*A short pause.*] Have you stopped to consider what you are going to do with the crying babes when your wife is at the court, aiding in the prosecution of another husband for infanticide? Do you know what it is to stand face to face with a woman in the trial of a case? Have you stopped to think what a terrible obstruction the right of women to deliver speeches in this Assembly will be to the legislative needs of this State? Are you aware that the legislation which this Commission favors gives to women the absolute control of her own money, so that there will be no longer any chance of reviving shattered fortunes through the instrumentality of matrimony? Is there any man under the sun who can view this state of affairs with composure? No doubt you think that politicians can always resort to the public funds in times of emergency. Let me tell you, however, that in these days of repudiation the State treasury is the last place to look for money. [*A short pause.*] In view of these facts, Mr. President, I have no hesitation in saying that the laws which this Commission proposes to adopt are infamous. No sane man would or should support such measures. The change is too sweeping. It will tax the ingenuity of our political lexicographers to invent names suitable to the changed conditions of things. What shall we call a female "wire-puller" or a woman

"lobbyist"? How shall we denominate female "stalwarts" or "half-breeds"? Believe me that whatever name is determined upon, it will make Webster (either the statesman or the lexicographer, as you wish) turn thrice in his grave. [*He sits down.*]

Mr. Adams [*arising*]. Mr. President, I do not propose to waste time in refuting the specious and ingenious arguments of the Senator who has just taken his seat. It is my duty, however, to correct some errors into which he has fallen, and which have led him to make false charges against the Commission. If the gentleman knew anything at all about the Massachusetts Woman's Rights Association he could not have uttered such sentimental trash as "the winsome smiles of fair damsels and the bright lustre of their eyes," for the members of that Association all wear blue goggles, and most of them are either old maids or married women whose winsome smiles, if they ever had any, have long since been converted into the scowls of a settled frown. I need only add that this change is in all probability due to the fact that they have married men similar in disposition and temper to the Senator. [*He sits down.*]

*Miss Mary Talker** [*arising*]. From time immemorial the affairs of the world have been under the management of men, and, in view of the miserable manner in which they have been managed, common decency alone should deter the male sex from offering any resistance to this reform movement. The gentleman who opposed this motion concluded his sophistical harangue by saying that political lexicographers would find great difficulty in inventing suitable names for female "lobbyists" or "wire-pullers" or female "stalwarts" or "half-breeds." Mr. President, this rests on the false premise that women can be as corrupt as men. The invention of such names is entirely superfluous. No true woman would so far forget her womanly virtue as to become a Republican—or a Democrat either, for that matter. But what if their proclivities should induce them to join the ring or machine? *Rings* are more appropriate ornaments for women than for men. And why, pray, should she be condemned to run the sewing machine, while he reserves the right to control the political machine? The latter is less difficult of management and pays infinitely better. [*A short pause.*] The gentleman seems to deplore the fact that the success of this movement will no longer enable him to bask his corruption in the sunlight of his wife's purity. What a superb sentiment! How pathetically sublime! This sad spectacle was no doubt meant to play upon your emotions, and, of course, you all felt penitent. But a little reason will suppress a great deal of emotion. If you really rue your past political indiscretions, rouse yourself from your moral lethargy, make out your accounts, and pay back the overdrawn amounts to the State treasurer. This is genuine repentance—true reform. [*A short pause.*] But it is not only in politics that woman has been denied her rights. Female education, too, has also been shamefully neglected. For a long time the ball-room has been a girl's school; dress her study; marriage her graduating certificate. It is your duty, gentlemen—though it may not be a very pleasant one—to aid us in teaching women that man is by no means so desirable an object as society would have us believe. This end can only be accomplished by opening to her the doors of our colleges, that she may study the history of the animal kingdom, and above all, the Darwinian theory, which will give her a true insight into the origin of

*This speech should be delivered in a forcible manner, but slowly, so that the speaker may weary her audience.

much-adored man. She should likewise be taught the higher branches of mathematics, so that she might be able to reckon precisely how much her future husband intended to make by his matrimonial operations. Great progress has already been made in this direction. It is no longer an uncommon thing for a wealthy young lady desperately in love with some young man to refuse to marry him simply because he is poor. [*A short pause.*] As to the ability of woman to pursue the higher branches of knowledge there can be no reasonable doubt. I will read to you a report in support of this assertion, prepared by the presidents of several universities where both sexes have been educated together. [*Taking out a roll of paper and reading.*] "The undersigned, Presidents of Lasalle, Tobik and other colleges, submit the following report on the practical results of co-education among the sexes, for the benefit of those who are interested in the subject. It is nothing but an innate prejudice which leads the majority of people to suppose that young men and young ladies cannot be advantageously educated in the same classes." (Mr. President, I recommend that sentiment to your especial consideration. But to continue.) "Early in March, 1880, a convention was called in the city of New York to discuss the propriety of admitting women to the universities and colleges of the United States. The proposition met with much opposition, but mostly from narrow-minded men whose arguments were based on all kinds of imaginary fears and evils." (Mr. President, I recommend that sentiment to your especial consideration. But to continue.) "Despite all opposition, however, the majority of the delegates succeeded in procuring the passage of a resolution the object of which was the entire obliteration of all distinctions between males and females, so far as the right to attend our colleges and universities was concerned. Many theologians who were present at the convocation seriously objected to co-education and roundly asserted that it would have a detrimental effect on female morals." (Theologians, Mr. President, are always solicitous about everybody's morals except their own. But—

Mr. Sheephead [*arising*]. Mr. President, I object to the further reading of that report. The members are beginning to get drowsy and it is time to adjourn. [*President raps for order.*]

Miss Talker [*eying the speaker angrily while he speaks, and then resuming*]. "Many theologians who were present at the convocation seriously objected to co-education, and roundly asserted that it would be sure to have a detrimental effect on female morals. Others objected that co-education among the sexes would develop a new species of intellectual flirtation. [*Signs of restlessness among the members.*] A fair trial of the plans proposed by the convention has not only dispelled all doubt as to its practicability, but it has also demonstrated the absurdity of all the arguments advanced by the opposition." (*Mr. President, I recommend that sentiment to your especial consideration. But to continue.*) "Since the date of this convention many other colleges [*some of the members begin to gape*] have resolved to admit women to their classes, and no less than fifty girls were graduated from these colleges. They have displayed remarkable ability [*some of the members begin to rub their eyes as if sleepy*] and rare talent in all the departments of science to which they have devoted themselves. As doctors, they destroy fewer lives; as lawyers, they charge less exorbitant prices; as theologians, they are less impious; as legislators, they speak more often and longer [*cries of "no doubt"*] in defence of their country." (*Mr.*

President, I recommend that sentiment to your especial consideration. But to continue.) "We are of the opinion that nothing is so well calculated to improve the tone of society than the salutary effect which the presence of females exerts over the mental activity of young men. It stimulates them to nobler purposes, it awakens latent intellect, it widens their field of observation, it whets their appetite for the æsthetic, and above all, it corrects any evil tendency towards uncouthness and incivility." (*Mr. President, I recommend that sentiment to your especial consideration. But to continue.*) "We trust the day is not far distant when—

Mr. Sheephead [*arising and gaping*]. Mr. President, I earnestly protest against permitting this woman to continue her inexhaustible flow of words. She is not only presuming on our good natures, but she is actually trespassing on our sleeping hours. [*President raps for order.*]

Miss Talker [*in an excited manner and angry tone*]. Mr. President, this is the second time that the gentleman (if such he may be called) has attempted to divert the attention of this Assembly from the most important part of my argument. I assure him no impertinent interference on his part can make me swerve from my duty. This untimely interruption, gentlemen, has, I know, almost made you lose the deep interest which you all feel in this report [*signs of disgust among the members*]; in order that you may thoroughly appreciate its salient features, I will re-read it from the beginning. [*Members all sigh and show signs of distress.*] I must and will accomplish my desired end.

Mr. Sheephead [*arising and gaping*]. If the lady's object was to put us all into a mesmeric sleep by the length of her magnetic speech, she has already well-nigh accomplished her end. [*President raps for order.*]

Miss Talker [*during the re-reading of this report the members gradually fall to sleep, except the President, who makes desperate efforts to keep awake*]. "It is nothing but an innate prejudice which leads the majority of people to suppose that young men and young ladies cannot be advantageously educated in the same classes. Early in March, 1880, a convention was called in the city of New York, to discuss the propriety of admitting women to the universities and colleges of the United States. The proposition met with much opposition, but mostly from narrow-minded men whose arguments were based on all kinds of imaginary fears and evils. [*Loud snoring is heard for a few seconds on the right side of the hall.*] Despite all opposition, however, the majority of the delegates succeeded in procuring the passage of a resolution, the object of which was the entire obliteration of all distinctions between males and females, so far as the right to attend our colleges and universities was concerned. Many theologians who were present at the convocation seriously objected to co-education, and roundly asserted that it would have a detrimental effect on female morals. Others objected that co-education among the sexes would develop a new species of intellectual flirtation. A fair trial of the plans proposed by the convention has not only dispelled all doubt as to its practicability, but it has also demonstrated the absurdity of all the arguments advanced by the opposition. Since the date of this convention many other colleges have resolved to admit women to their classes, and no less than fifty girls were graduated from these colleges. They have displayed remarkable ability and rare talent in all the departments of science to which they have devoted themselves. As doctors, they

destroy fewer lives; as lawyers, they charge less exorbitant prices; as theologians, they are less impious; as legislators, they speak more often and longer in defence of their country. We are of the opinion that nothing is so well calculated to improve the tone of society than the salutary effect which the presence of females exerts over the mental activity of young men. It stimulates them to nobler purposes, it awakens latent intellect, it widens their field of observation, it whets their appetite for the æsthetic, and above all, it corrects any evil tendency towards uncouthness and incivility. We trust the day is near at hand when these facts will be universally recognized. The good to be derived from the institution of such a reform is inestimable; upon its success or failure depends woman's future." Now, Mr. President, I will relate a few facts which came under my personal—

Mr. Brown. Miss Talker, as it is long past the constitutional hour of adjournment, I will be constrained to ask you to discontinue your speech.

Miss Talker. Mr. President and Gentlemen: Thanking you all for your kind and earnest attention [*loud snoring is heard from the left side of the hall*], I can only hope that this motion will be carried.

Mr. Brown [*rapping loudly for order, which rouses the members, who turn around and rub their eyes or gape*]. All in favor of this motion say [*gaping*] aye.

All [*sleepily*]. Aye!

Mr. Brown. All opposed [*gaping*], no.

Mr. Sheephead [*very loud*]. No!

Mr. Brown [*rubbing his eyes*]. The motion is carried and the assembly stands adjourned. [*Curtain falls.*]

ACT II.

(*Several months are supposed to elapse between* ACT I *and* ACT II.)

SCENE:—*Interior view of Miss Mary Talker's Law Office.*

There is one door in the centre, one to the right and one to the left. Over the centre door are the words "Mary Talker, Attorney-at-Law"; over the right door the words "Waiting Room." To the left of the centre door is a large placard in full view of the audience, on which the following notice is printed: "Special attention given to the contracting of Mortgage Loans, Marriages, and other incumbrances. Husbands procured at the shortest possible notice. No extra charges for women advanced in years. Divorces procured at 50 per cent. below the regular charges. All business strictly confidential and secretly conducted." To the far right of the centre door are a high desk and two high ordinary counting-room chairs, occupied by two female clerks, who are engaged in writing when curtain rises. To the near left of the centre door is an elegant lawyer's desk, at which Miss Talker is seated reading a newspaper.

Enter MRS. STARR MOROSE.

Mrs. Starr Morose [*excited*]. Good morning, Miss Talker.

Miss Talker. Good morning, Mrs. Morose. Why, you seem to be excited. Take a seat. [*She offers her a chair.*]

Mrs. Morose. It's just as I told you, Miss Talker; ever since the passage of that Woman's Rights Bill I've had nothing but trouble—trouble—trouble. Scarcely had the new law been enacted than

Johanna, my eldest daughter, took it into her head that she must be elected to Congress as a Massachusetts Congresswoman. In order to procure the nomination she started out on a stump-speech expedition, and ever since she has had a brain affection, superinduced, so the doctors think, by a sudden, violent and long-protracted attack of civil service reform. A short while after this terrible calamity my second daughter, Elsie, applied for a position as bank cashier. She succeeded in obtaining such a position in the First National Bank. But alas! the temptation was too great for her, and like the male cashiers before her, she absconded never to return again. And now my third and last daughter has become entangled in the meshes of the law.

Miss Talker [*in a dramatic manner*]. A most noble profession! a most noble profession!

Mrs. Morose. I don't think you quite understand me, madam. She has never evinced any desire to adopt the profession of law; that would only be evidence of premature immoral propensities. But she has been actually sued [*with strong emphasis*]—sued by a most impertinent, arrogant, empty-brained young law student.

Miss Talker [*with delight and surprise*]. Sued!

Mrs. Morose [*angrily*]. Well, you seem to be extraordinarily delighted at the prospect. That is the way with you lawyers, the possibility of a fee steels your hearts against all the stings which wound a mother's heart. I expected better things of female advocates, but it is with you like the rest of them, one can hardly state his case before you stretch out your hands to grasp the fee.

Miss Talker [*indignantly*]. Not at all, not at all! You mistake the real signification of my apparent delight. Whenever I hear that a young innocent girl has been sued by one of those male saints, it makes my blood boil, it shocks my nervous system, it sends a thrill of anger through my entire body, causing a smile of contentment to light upon my countenance, which is but the bitter irony of scorn and contempt. My charity is broad and comprehensive. Oh! it is not the *fee*, nor yet the *male*, but the *female*, about which I am concerned.

Mrs. Morose. Well, then, let me tell you the cause of this suit. My daughter May is a very imprudent girl, but her youth may be pleaded in extenuation of her childish indiscretions. As you may have imagined, she was very fond of this supercilious, shoddy law student, whose name, by the way, is Mr. Robert Green. Though he was reputed to be wealthy, I have peremptorily forbade May to associate with him. She obeyed for a while, but as soon as the Woman's Rights Bill was passed she not only became refractory, but absolutely unmanageable [*with strong emphasis*]. Because I refused to allow her to receive this Mr. Green at home, she determined—now that the Legislature has wiped away all distinction between men and women—to visit this insolent fellow at his own house. After continuing her visits for a few months, she had the boldness to propose to him, and he immediately accepted the proposal. Subsequently she refused to marry him, on the ground that he had wilfully deceived her as to his rank in society and the amount of his income. Mr. Green at once engaged the services of a certain lawyer, Sheephead, who has entered suit against my daughter to recover $20,000 damages for breach of promise to marry.

Miss Talker [*in a tragic manner*]. A woman's pride wounded! Ye gods of justice, defend our noble sex, aid me in the trial of this case, give me strength and time to say all that I may desire to say, and strike my opponent dumb, in the interest of truth and justice.

Mrs. Morose [*watching her with surprise*]. Why, you are growing quite enthusiastic all of a sudden.

Miss Talker. Yes, that is an apostrophe which I always deliver before engaging in a legal combat—making, of course, the necessary changes to suit the occasion. You may depend upon it, Mrs. Morose, I will vindicate the honor of our sex at all hazards; I will meet and demolish the foe. Let us go at once to the clerk's office, and I will enter my appearance.

[*Exeunt Mrs. Morose and Miss Talker.*]

1*st Clerk.* I tell you, Sue, the younger generation of females are fast coming to the front.

2*d Clerk.* That they are, Mag. When we were young, girls waited until the men came to see them.

1*st Clerk.* Indeed they did, Sue, though some of them were a long time coming.

2*d Clerk.* Since the passage of the new bill women are all the time quarreling.

1*st Clerk.* No doubt that's the reason lawyer Talker worked so diligently in the interest of the bill. You can never tell what these professional women are up to.

2*d Clerk.* It has been said, I know not with how much truth, that the new bill would never have been passed had Miss Talker not put the members to sleep by her very interesting speech.

Enter MR. A. A. B. SHEEPHEAD *and* MR. R. GREEN.

Mr. Sheephead [*to 1st Clerk*]. Is Mr. Talker in?

1*st Clerk.* Miss Talker, you mean, sir. No, sir, she just stepped out.

Mr. Sheephead [*to Mr. Green*]. Well, this is a piece of the coolest effrontery on record. [*To 1st Clerk*].—Do you mean to accuse me of making secret engagements with Mr. Talker's daughter? I suppose a man who has had twenty years' experience at the bar ought to know what he wants when he asks for anything. When I call for whiskey straight, I don't want lemonade. [*Looking around the room he perceives the sign over the centre door all of a sudden. He puts his hands in his pockets, sways to and fro, staring at the sign in astonishment, and whistles for a few seconds.*] Great Scott! shades of the almighty Cæsar! it *is* a woman. An attorney-at-law, and a member of that abominable, most detestable Massachusetts Woman's Rights Association—the very woman with whom I had that memorable wrangle in the Senate. [*To Mr. Green*].—My dear Green, I'll be compelled to raise the fee. We'll be completely annihilated, if not in flesh, at least in spirits. Do you know, sir, I'd rather be pitted against five of the most eminent male lawyers this city affords than one such long-tongued woman. A man will always come to some settlement, even if it is only ten cents on a dollar; but as for a woman—well, you may as well save your breath.

Mr. Green. She mu—mu—must be a ter—ri—ri—ble mon—mon—ster.

Mr. Sheephead. That she is, my boy, that she is. I tell you these professional women worry the life and soul out of us poor men. It has turned out just as I predicted at the last session of the Legislature. I exerted all my mental energies to avert this terrible calamity, but all

to no purpose. I trust that the rising generation of young lawyers, who are springing up everywhere, and on very barren soil too, will resort to every means, fair or foul, to have this law which permits women to practice in our courts repealed. These women are continually cutting the prices. Ah! [*sighing*] when I think of those days of peace and exorbitant fees which have forever vanished, my heart leaps out to our departed legislators,

[*Pathetically.*] Oh! large retainers, sweet relics of the past,
How low sounds your bugle, how faint is your blast!

Mr. Green. Do you—you think there is—is any ch—chance of re—recovering any damages?

Mr. Sheephead [*puzzled*]. Oh—certainly, certainly. As a student of the law let me inform you that it is a lawyer's duty always to think so. A doubt may now and then come athwart the intellectual operations of his brain, but he should rise superior to all obstacles, and taking the retainer like a man, he should say to his client, "My friend, you've got a very good case, but, of course, there's no telling what a jury may do." The jury, my boy, is the lawyer's soothing syrup. Should he win his case, all well and good; should he be so unfortunate as to lose it, he need only say to his client, "My friend, the unfavorable verdict is due entirely to the stupidity of the jury; the law was decidedly in your favor." That is the reason, Green, why nine-tenths of the bar object to the abolition of jury trials.

Mr. Green. That—that is not the—the kind of law that—that they tea—teach us at—at the univer—ver—si—si—ty. You—you think, then, that—that we can re—re—cover?

Mr. Sheephead. There's no doubt of it. We must stand up bravely for our rights, and if this woman attempts to deliver any of her fifty mile-speeches, when we come to try this case—why, I'll move the court to have her disbarred for wilfully and maliciously obstructing the course of justice. [*Taking out his watch.*] It's getting late. [*To 1st Clerk.*] Miss or Mrs. Clerk—whichever it may be—what time will the old lady be in?

1*st Clerk.* I expect her every moment.

Mr. Sheephead [*to Mr. Green*]. Well, Green, suppose we retire to the waiting-room and take a smoke. [*Giving him a cigar.*]

Mr. Green. As—as you say. A youth of my—my ar—ar—dent spir—its always likes sm—smoke and—and fire.

[*Exeunt Mr. S. and Mr. G., arm in arm.*]

1*st Clerk.* That's a rather impertinent sort of fellow. He speaks about Miss Talker as though we had no ears.

2*d Clerk.* I wonder who he can be?

1*st Clerk.* Some second-rate pettifogger, I suppose. When he comes to consult with Miss Talker on law questions, he'll rue the day he was born, I'll warrant.

Enter Dr. Brosius *and* Mr. Green [*right door*].

Mr. Green [*with a cigar in his hand and speaking while entering*]. I—I—say, doc—tor, does sh—she attend to—to all your col—lec—tions?

Doctor Brosius. Every one. Green, these women make capital collectors. Debtors pay just to get rid of them, besides they only ask 5 per cent. commission, while the regular charges are ten.

Mr. Green. We—well, doctor, how—how do they—they suc—succeed in med—medicine?

Dr. Brosius [*speaking as one trying to suppress the truth*]. Not so well, not so well. I could not conscientiously advise you to use them. It is especially in the field of politics that women have been pre-eminently successful. This is largely owing to the skill and promptness with which they answer queries propounded by the Civil Service Reform Association. Last week I was invited to attend one of the examinations. A young lady presented herself as a candidate to fill a vacancy in the Police Board. The examiner asked her what she conceived to be the duty of a policeman. She replied: "He should studiously avoid all danger and never interfere with other people when they are engaged in quarreling. In this way the Board will be able to preserve a fine body of police, for none will ever be mangled or injured." He then asked her what was the difference between a night policeman and a somnambulist. To this she replied: "A somnambulist walks when he should be in bed, a night policeman is in bed when he should be walking."

Mr. Green. I—I gu—guess hungry of—fice—see—seekers are not—not very fo—fond of such com—competitors.

Dr. Brosius. I should say not. [*Taking up a newspaper and glancing casually over its columns.*]

Mr. Green [*looking at the large placard near the centre door*]. I—I—say, doc—doctor, that's a ve—very for—formidable pla—placard yon—der. [*Putting on his eye-glasses and reading.*] "Spe—special atten—tion giv—given to the con—contracting of mort—gage loans, mar—riages and other in—in—cumbrances. Hus—husbands procured at the short—shortest possi—ble no—notice. No ex—extra charges for—for women ad—advanced in years. Di—vorces pro—cured at fif—fifty per cent. be—below the regu—lar char—charges; all busi—siness strictly con—fidential and se—secretly con—conducted."

Dr. Brosius. This is what she calls transacting business secretly. Listen to this advertisement in the *Boston Herald:* WANTED!—*By a widow who has had ample experience in married life, a husband with thirty to fifty thousand dollars capital. No objection to one having over that amount. Must be a man of strictly temperate habits. No widowers need apply. Address M. T., 7½ Court street.* [*Looks at Mr. Green.*] Green, there is nothing like the noble gift of prophecy in social matters. John Stuart Mill long ago contended that marriage was nothing more than a partnership, and that the day was not far off when it would be so recognized by the world. Who would have dreamt that Mill's prophecy would have been verified in the columns of a newspaper? [*He sits down on the chair behind the desk.*]

Mr. Green. We—well, doctor, I—I have some busi—siness with—with Mr. Sheep—head. Won't you—you join us? [*Walks towards the right door.*]

Dr. Brosius [*taking a pen-holder in his hand.*] No, thank you, I must write a note to Miss Talker, then I'll return to the office.

Mr. Green. You'll ex—excuse me, doc—doctor.

Dr. Brosius. Certainly. [*Exit Mr. Green, right door.*]

Dr. Brosius. Confound that fellow! he's as stupid as a new-born ape. Let me see [*meditating*]. What shall I write? [*He writes, and reads as he writes.*]

Miss Talker: Please attend to that collection for me as soon as possible, as I hear the ungrateful wretch whose life I have saved intends to abscond and defraud his creditors, doctors not excepted. Before I under-

take to effect any more cures, I shall certainly follow your advice and apply at the Mercantile Agency to ascertain the pecuniary standing of my patients. Yours, etc., DR. BROSIUS.

[*To 1st Clerk.*] Give this note to Miss Talker when she returns.

1st Clerk. Yes, sir. [*He places the note on the desk.*]

[*Exit Dr. Brosius, left door.*]

2d Clerk. Mag, that student's a queer-looking chap, isn't he?

1st Clerk. Yes, he's entirely too æsthetic. He reminds one of Oscar Wilde.

Enter MISS TALKER. [*She sits at her desk and begins to unfold the note lying on the table.*]

Mr. Sheephead [*speaking in a loud voice in the waiting-room so that he is heard without*]. Yes, my boy, I tell you twenty years experience in the law has given [*entering with Mr. Green and continuing to speak in a bold, boastful manner*] me the dash to cope with the fiercest enemy; it has armed me with a panoply of audacious boldness impenetrable to the shafts and arrows even of a woman's tongue. I fear nothing under—[*suddenly perceiving Miss Talker, he is startled and trembles from head to foot*]. [*Aside*]—Shades of Blackstone! it's the identical woman. She's remarkably handsome without those blue goggles. [*To Miss Talker, in a tremulous voice*]—Good morning. You are Miss Talker, I believe? Perhaps you remember me, Madam. My name is Sheephead. This is Mr. Green. [*Mr. Green and Miss Talker bow.*]

Miss Talker. Oh! I see, you are the attorney for Mr. Green in the case of *Green* versus *Morose*.

Mr. Sheephead [*taking a seat; Mr. Green doing the same. Mr. Sheephead gathers courage*]. Exactly so. You see, Miss Talker, your case is quite hopeless. I came here with Mr. Green for the purpose of coming to some amicable settlement. We have entered suit for $20,000 damages; we'll compromise on $15,000. Terms: One-third, cash; the balance in six and twelve months.

Miss Talker [*in a loud voice and a threatening manner*]. Amicable settlement! compromise, sir! This unheard-of audacity!

Mr. Sheephead [*to Mr. Green*]. I told you so, the explosion's coming.

Miss Talker. Don't speak of compromises to me, sir. Female attorneys always have their eyes open—

Mr. Sheephead. And their mouths too.

Miss Talker. Have I not plainly demonstrated in the cases of *Brown* v. *Black*, *Smith* v. *Wicks*, and *Snow* v. *Jones*, that there neither is, was, nor ever will be such a thing as compromising with a woman. The days for swindling clients are past. Justice is no longer to be trampled upon.

Mr. Sheephead. But, my dear madam, you, who have acquired such a vast amount of legal knowledge, must certainly know that the law in this controversy is decidedly in my favor. There is one unbroken chain of decisions which establishes, beyond all doubt, that when a man makes a promise to marry a woman and subsequently breaks the promise, he thereby renders himself liable to an action for damages. This canon of law rests on the equitable doctrine that when a woman strains every nerve to secure a husband and a young man induces her, by a promise of marriage, to be lax in her further efforts to accomplish this end, he he has thereby ruined her matrimonial prospects and is justly respon-

sible. Now, by the passage of the Woman's Rights Bill, woman has been placed in all respects on an equality with man, and since it is rapidly becoming the fashion for young ladies to visit the opposite sex, it follows that the same rule of liability applies to females who violate their contractual obligations as to males. Your client, therefore, must marry Mr. Green, or pay the $15,000.

Miss Talker [*eying the speaker contemptuously*]. If I thought that I were really compelled to choose between those alternatives, the dictates of my conscience would force me to advise my client to pay the $15,000.

Mr. Sheephead [*to Mr. Green*]. That's hard on you, my boy.

Miss Talker [*in an excited manner and loud voice*]. But, my dear sir, in arriving at such a conclusion you only parade your ignorance of the law. You can't hoodwink me, sir. All the authorities sustain the position which I propose to take. [*Speaking very rapidly*]—"Marriage is a civil contract." *Bishop on Marriage*; 20 *Maryland*, 300; 40 *New York*, 400; 70 *Ohio*, 700; 50 *Illinois*, 500. "The plaintiff cannot recover damages on the breach of such a contract when he himself is guilty of wilfully making false representations of his social rank and financial standing." *Browning on Husband and Wife;* 1 *Massachusetts*, 10; 2 *Maryland*, 20; 3 *Iowa*, 30; 4 *New York*, 40; 5 *Ohio*, 50. [*Speaking less rapidly*]—On these high authorities I rest my case, and when I quote from these adjudications you will find to your dismay and horror that you are nothing but a pettifogulizing idiot.

Mr. Sheephead [*almost crying with rage*]. Idiot! madam? Recollect that you are calling a member of your profession an idiot. My moral constitution can withstand any amount of aggression; physically I am firm as a rock, but when a woman calls me a pettifogulizing idiot, it rouses all the resentment of my nature.

Miss Talker. I assure you, sir, I am entirely unconcerned whether it rouses your anger or not. My office is no court-room; the proper place to discuss this matter is in court, and there's where I propose to discuss it. The speech which I shall deliver before the jury will bring the blush of shame to that young man's cheek [*meaning Mr. Green*]. It will surpass all my previous efforts, not only in length, but also in breadth. I will make both you and him repent the day that you ignominiously sought to besmirch the character of an innocent, inexperienced young girl.

Mr. Sheephead [*he whispers a few seconds to Mr. Green; then straightening up, in order to appear brave, he speaks timidly at first, but gradually gathers courage, speaking louder and louder and louder*]. I have consulted my client, and he authorizes me to say that your scurrilous and abusive language renders it entirely incompatible with his dignity to think of compromising this case. All women have a natural aptitude for quarreling, but God save me from such a misfortune as a professional wife! I have not the slightest delicacy in pronouncing you to be an inhuman tyrant, a heartless brute, insusceptible to all expressions of love; a woman without the least consideration for the wounded feelings of a poor innocent and inexperienced man. You shall pay for your slanderous words at the temple of justice. I warn you in advance that I have been a married man too long, to be intimidated by the threats of female tyrants. I mean to protect the rights of a persecuted young man. I mean to defend outraged justice. I mean to show your hard-hearted girls that they cannot trifle with the

fine sensibilities of that most delicately constructed organ, the male heart. With the inexhaustible fertility of my brain, with the deepest sympathy of my soul, with the labor of these arms, I shall toil, toil, toil until I succeed in teaching your fair damsels what the true essence of love is. With all the vehemence at my command, I shall denounce your society belles, who only ring when the silver jingles. Before the jury I shall lay bare the foul tricks of which my client has been the victim—not in the rhetorical flourishes of well-rounded sentences, but in plain unvarnished language. You may speak the longest, but I will hollow the loudest. [*As loud as possible*]—The long bray of the ass shall be drowned under the loud roar of the lion. [*Curtain falls.*]

ACT III.

SCENE.—*An apartment in Mrs. Morose's house. Mrs. M. seated at a table. Enter* DR. BROSIUS. [*Centre door.*]

Dr. Brosius. Good morning, madam. How are you this morning?

Mr. Morose. Not at all well, doctor, not at all well. Family troubles are fast breaking down my once robust constitution. Ah! doctor, I fear my days are numbered.

Dr. Brosius. My dear madam, if the number becomes as large in the future as it has been in the past, I scarcely think there exists any just cause for your immediate alarm. Still, to be on the safe side, I'll write you a prescription.

Mrs. Morose. Oh! never mind that, doctor. Your visit to-day is to be strictly non-professional. I want you as a witness in the case of *Green* v. *Morose.*

Dr. Brosius. Why, madam, you don't mean to tell me that you've been sued?

Mrs. Morose. Not exactly. My daughter May has become involved in a legal difficulty with that empty-brained law student, Mr. Green. He has sued her for breach of promise to marry, and assesses the damages at $20,000 [*the doctor whistles*]. An arrangement has been made whereby the witnesses are to be privately examined in this house by the counsel on both sides. After all the testimony has been taken, the opposing counsel will hold a consultation for the purpose of making some amicable settlement. Miss Talker——

Dr. Brosius. Is that your attorney?

Mrs. Morose. Yes.

Dr. Brosius. Lord help the poor man on the other side!

Mrs. Morose. Miss Talker is bitterly opposed to compromises, but it is always best to avoid a scandal, if it can be avoided without any loss of money; and after desperate efforts, I have at last persuaded her to consent to this mode of settlement, if it is at all possible.

Dr. Brosius. Madam, in my opinion, a doctor should always hold himself aloof from the contaminating influences of the law; still, if I can be of any service to you, in a legitimate way, I'll not be wanting.

Mrs. Morose. What I ask of you, doctor, is an easy task. [*They both walk towards the centre door.*] I want you to testify to my daughter's character.

Dr. Brosius. Well, then, you can depend upon my testimony.
Mrs. Morose. I'll inform you, doctor, when we are ready.
[*Exit Mrs. Morose, left door.*]

Enter MR. SHEEPHEAD *and* MR. GREEN.

[*Mr. S. is followed by three servants, each of whom carries six or eight law books.*]

Mr. Sheephead [*speaking in a loud voice to Mr. Green as they enter*]. Have patience, my boy, have patience! We'll be sure to ensnare the female tiger. Where there is law, there is hope. [*To the servants*]—Place them here. [*The servants put the books on the floor to the right of the centre door, and then retire.*] Ah! doctor, are you here? [*They shake hands.*] [*To Mr. Green*]—Green, see if the witnesses have come. [*Exit Mr. Green.*] You physicians ought to be getting quite rich now that the scarlet fever has become an epidemic in this vicinity.

Dr. Brosius. Well, probably we would be, if we conducted our business on *legal* principles.

Mr. Sheephead. Quite the reverse, sir. If you conducted your business legally, I suppose one-half of your profession would be in the poor-house. Nothing pays so well, now-a-days, as medicine. My own father, sir, was an experienced physician, and I distinctly recollect having heard him say, on one occasion, that if he ever had four sons, the first should be a physician, the second an apothecary, the third an undertaker, and the fourth a lawyer. You will observe that they can play right into each other's hands. The physician prescribes, the apothecary kills, the undertaker makes the coffin, the lawyer denies the validity of the dead man's will. But alas! I was the only son he ever had, and though it had been his wish that I should study medicine, my strong love of justice, my utter aversion to money-making—traits which early developed themselves in my character—induced him to give way to my own predilections, and so—much to the honor of the profession—I became an attorney-at-law.

Dr. Brosius. I say, Sheephead, are you connected with this case of Mr. Green's?

Mr. Sheephead. Certainly, doctor. I represent Mr. Green; Miss Mary Talker represents Miss May Morose.

Dr. Brosius. My dear Sheephead, my poor fellow! I don't envy you. I extend you my deepest sympathy. If you've taken this case on a contingent fee, you might as well make up your mind to take nothing and go. She is a most powerful speaker, a most logical reasoner, and a most shrewd manipulator. I heard it said that when she begins to speak, the most beautiful, ornate and euphonious phrases flow from her fountain of eloquence like an incessant rush of sparkling water from some stupendous falls.

Mr. Sheephead [*dolefully*]. Yes, I've had a taste of her eloquence when I was in the Senate. [*Placing his hand on Dr. B.'s shoulder and speaking confidentially*]—Do you know, doctor, that Miss Talker is a very handsome woman? I just made that discovery. You see, it used to be one of the laws of the Massachusetts Woman's Rights Association that every member must wear a pair of blue goggles. The object of this was to ward off the impertinent gaze of male admirers. When I first saw Miss Talker she had on a pair of those abominable glasses, and it actually disfigured her. Since she has

begun the practice of law, however, she has ceased to wear them, and I tell you in confidence, doctor, that she has made a decided impression upon me.

Dr. Brosius. What, Sheephead, you don't mean to tell me that you are in love!

Mr. Sheephead. Oh! no, to be sure not; only, sir, I have not been able to sleep a wink since I've seen that woman's eyes as Nature made them.

Dr. Brosius. I suppose you attribute your sleeplessness to indigestion, nervousness, or the like.

Mr. Sheephead. Yes, exactly.

Enter MR. GREEN. [*Right door.*]

Mr. Green. Th—the wit—witnesses ar—are wa—waiting, Mr.—Mr. Shee—Sheephead.

Mr. Sheephead. Well, then, doctor, I must be off. [*To Green*]—Green, I'll leave you to entertain the doctor, while I interrogate the witnesses, and mind you now that nobody tampers with them as they leave this house. [*Exit Mr. Sheephead, right door.*]

Mr. Green [*despondently*]. Doc—doc—tor, I—I'm tew—wibly out of spiw—its to-day.

Dr. Brosius. You know what I do when I'm out of spirits? I always fill up the jug.

Mr. Green. Now, doc—doc—tor, to be sewi—ous, I—I wa—want you to—to do me a fa—favor.

Dr. Brosius. I hope it has nothing to do with that lawsuit of yours.

Mr. Green. Yes—yes it—it has. I—I want you—you to testify to my—my good cha—wacter.

Dr. Brosius. Well, Green, to be honest, I don't know whether I could conscientiously so testify. Besides, I've been called as a witness on the other side for the same purpose.

Mr. Green. We—well, doctor, there's no—no law pre—preventing us both from—from hav—ing go—good cha—wacters.

Dr. Brosius. Yes, but I know you too long, Green. You've certainly been a scamp in your day. However, a doctor's conscience is very elastic, and if after mature deliberation I should come to the conclusion that the stretch is not too great [*they walk toward the centre door*], I'll act accordingly. Till then, *au revoir*.

Mr. Green. Au re—revoir.

[*Exeunt Dr. B. and Mr. G. The former leaves by the centre door; the latter by left door.*]

Enter MISS TALKER. [*Centre door.*]

[*She is followed by three female servants, each of whom carries six to eight law books.*]

Miss Talker. Place them on the floor. [*The servants put them on the floor to the left of the centre door, and then retire.*]

Miss Talker [*angrily*]. How strange it is that my baser instincts always suppress my nobler emotions! My angry passions had almost smothered the tender affections which the first sight of Mr. Sheephead awakened in my breast; but now that the din and noise of our recent battles have subsided, the holy passion revives again. But, who shall say that Mary Talker, the President of the Massachusetts Woman's Rights Association, retained so much of her womanly nature in these civilized times as to be still able to love? Women must have more

head and less heart. Shall I be made the dupe of a male attorney who abused me as this man has done? Never shall it be said that my pride was bent by tender feelings for this attorney. [*Meditating*]—Besides, I had almost forgotten that Mr. Sheephead is a married man. No! to married men, women should never make any concession whatever, though it is not at all impossible, in this age of enlightenment, to induce aristocratic gentlemen to desert their wives for fairer maidens.

Enter MR. SHEEPHEAD. [*Right door.*]

Mr. Sheephead [*writing in a note-book while entering*]. Confound the luck! That's the most unsatisfactory evidence I ever—[*perceiving Miss Talker*]—Pardon me, madam, I was just observing how remarkably satisfactory the testimony of our witnesses has proven, though all of them have not yet been examined. [*Aside*]—Now, or never! I can restrain myself no longer.

Miss Talker [*angrily*]. That is no concern of mine, sir.

Mr. Sheephead [*smiling*]. My dearest Miss Talker, how æsthetically charming is your attire, how lovely your countenance, with what a crushing effect the radiance of your soft brown eyes—

Miss Talker [*frowning*]. Sir! how dare you address me thus after the insulting language of yesterday.

Mr. Sheephead [*in a pathetic manner*]. Ah! most adorable creature, lawyers will sometimes quarrel. It is a necessary part of the profession. The weaker the case, the more abusive the epithets. Often in the vehemence of debate, often in our anxieties for our fees, we overleap the bounds of propriety and decorum by uttering words, the mere thought of which in calmer times would put us to shame. You, too, have spoken harsh words of me, but no sooner had the last sounds of your offensive words died away, than I could detect the prayer of forgiveness lurking about your precious lips. When I first beheld your bewitching countenance, it completely unnerved me. I put forth every effort to abuse you—for it was my duty; but alas! all to no purpose.

Miss Talker. Pray, don't excuse yourself, you succeeded quite well. Had it not been for Mrs. Morose's earnest entreaties, I would never have consented to be present at this consultation.

Mr. Sheephead. Ah! madam, you wrong me. What I *did* say was nothing, compared with what I *might have* said. It is a great consolation for sinners to know that none of them are so bad, but that they might have been worse.

Miss Talker [*angrily*]. Mr. Sheephead, recollect, sir, that I am here strictly on business, and not on a courting expedition. Quite a remarkable change is noticeable in your conduct since last week. Your pretended piety, your feigned repentance and your assumed good manners are no doubt well concocted schemes, wherewith you fain would ensnare an unwary victim. Beware of me, sir!

Mr. Sheephead. Ah! madam, there is beauty in your very frowns, goodness in your evil thoughts, and love in your angry words. [*Very pathetically*]—You will believe me, my dearest Miss Talker, when I swear that I am perfectly sincere in everything that I have said to you this evening. Why should I be unsusceptible to female charms? Why should I be wholly devoid of the holy passion of love? A lawyer's heart is not love-proof. Stern though the stuff be of which it is made, yet withal can it be wounded by Cupid's arrows. How I came to overlook your irresistible charms when last we met, is one of those in-

dissoluble mysteries which sometimes occurs only to baffle our very senses.

Miss Talker [*angrily*]. Your conduct, sir, is outrageous. Do you think, sir, that you can deceive me by this despicable trick of yours. It is very likely, indeed, that you who reviled me in the Senate, who slandered me in the presence of your own client, have all of a sudden become my most ardent admirer.

Mr. Sheephead. Strange it is, but true. Ah, madam, "Love is blind and lovers cannot see the petty follies that themselves commit." *Merchant of Venice, Act* II, *Scene* 6. But I have not become a sudden convert, as you suppose. The sublime feelings which I entertain for you have passed through all the various stages of the Darwinian theory of evolution. First came the seed, then the bud, and now comes the beautiful period of efflorescence. I tried to arrest its further development until this case had been settled, but it seems as though the combined strength of Hercules and Samson cannot restrain me from giving expression to the ebullition of my feelings. "Thou wouldst as soon go kindle fire with snow as seek to quench the fire of love with words." *The Two Gentlemen of Verona, Act* II, *Scene* 7. Come, then, dearest, do not be angry. I do not know the cause of my stupid blindness in the past, I do not know how I came to abuse you, this only I do know that I adore you, I worship you, and you must be my wife.

Miss Talker [*with contempt*]. Your wife, indeed! Sir, your impertinent audacity is becoming absolutely sublime. Have you so soon forgotten the pledges which you have made to another woman? Have you so soon forgotten the boastful words which you uttered but yesterday?

Mr. Sheephead [*confused*]. Pledges? Boastful words? I don't understand you.

Miss Talker [*assuming a threateniny attitude and speaking in a deep voice, in imitation of Mr. Sheephead*]. "I warn you in advance that I have been a married man too long to be intimidated by the threats of female tyrants." Do you wish, sir, to become a bigamist? Did you not in the presence of Mr. Green and myself openly avow that you were a married man?

Mr. Sheephead [*innocently*]. Yes, I stated so, but that was a mere professional utterance, and like all statements made by the profession, it was not strictly true.

Miss Talker. Then you are not married?

Mr. Sheephead. Certainly not.

Miss Talker. That being the case, I am bound to accept your apology.

Mr. Sheephead [*taking her hand*]. And my hand, too.

Enter MR. GREEN *and* MRS. MOROSE, *from opposite sides.*

Mr. Green and Mrs. Morose [*each looking at their own attorney, and speaking in an angry tone*]. Is this consultation going to last all night? [*Mr. Sheephead and Miss Talker immediately separate and eye each other angrily.*]

Miss Talker [*in an excited manner to Mrs. Morose*]. Madam, I fear we can never come to any settlement; the opprobrious language of the attorney on the other side has only caused me to be more resolute.

Mr. Sheephead [*in an excited manner to Mr. Green*]. Green, I am afraid no compromise is possible. Any concession to an attorney who

slanders me as this woman has done, would be an outrage on my self-respect.

Mr. Green and Mrs. Morose. Well. what's to be done?

[*Mr. Sheephead and Miss Talker seem to be puzzled.*]

Mr. Sheephead. Give me one more opportunity, and if that fails, the case must be carried to court.

Mr. Green. I—I con—sent.

Mrs. Morose. I agree, provided the consultation lasts no longer than fifteen minutes.

Mr. Sheephead. Very well.

[*Exeunt Mr. Green and Mrs. Morose. Opposite doors.*]

Mr. Sheephead [*whistling and fanning himself with a handkerchief*]. That was a pretty narrow escape. There's a great difference between business in *court* and *courting business*. In speaking of Cupid's *arrows* of love, I had entirely forgotten about Blackstone's *canons* of law. Dearest, how shall we dispose of this bothersome lawsuit?

Miss Talker. I have a proposition to make, which, I am sure, will meet with your approval. We will compromise the case on $12,000, and keep the money ourselves.

Mr. Sheephead. That is impossible without being detected in the act. I have appropriated much money in my day, but it was always done in a strictly professional manner.

Miss Talker. My dear Mr. Sheephead, nothing is impossible in the code of legal ethics. Listen to me, and I will explain how we can elude the strictest vigilance. I will inform my client that after a thorough examination of the latest authorities, I find that your client is fully entitled to recover the sum of at least $20,000, and that the only concession which you will make is this, namely, that Miss May Morose must marry Mr. Green and pay him $12,000 in addition. I will further inform her that the money must be paid directly to me, and that, owing to the extreme sensitiveness of Mr. Green on that point, she must swear never to speak to him concerning the payment of the money. You must then persuade Mr. Green to marry Miss May Morose by inducing him to believe that there is no possibility of his recovering any damages. The money which I have thus acquired we will appropriate to our own use, but, of course, in a strictly professional way.

Mr. Sheephead. That's a capital idea. It is worthy of the shrewdest lawyer that ever breathed in the most vitiated atmosphere of the law.

Miss Talker. Let us proceed at once. I will go into the drawing-room and inform Mr. Green of your desire to speak with him. When you have finished, stamp your foot on the floor as you leave this room, and instantly my victims and myself will appear.

[*Exit Miss Talker. Right door.*]

Mr. Sheephead. Charming Miss Talker! How the deuce could I ever have called her such wicked names? If I had only not fallen into that very serious error of holding myself out as a married man, this dispute might have been long since brought to an end.—But to carry out my part of this ingenious programme. Let me see what shall I do to deceive Green. Ah! I have it. [*He kneels down, opens all the law-books which are lying on the floor and spreads them all over the floor,*

chairs and tables, and then runs his hands through his hair so as to give himself the appearance of a hard student.] Now, then, for the coming conflict! If I do not succeed in making Green believe that I have been sedulously studying this law question, he certainly must believe that I've been engaging in a fierce combat in his behalf.

[*Enter* MR. GREEN. *Right door.*]

Mr. Green. We—well, how—how have you—you dis—discharged your du—duty?

Mr. Sheephead [*vivaciously*]. Duty! Was there ever a man in this broad universe who more conscientiously protected and defended the interests of his clients? Cast your eyes around this room, look gently upon this battle-field [*pointing to his head*], and tell me candidly if you ever saw stronger external evidence of internal volcanic disturbances of an attorney's brain? Why, my dear sir, this room is literally deluged with law-books, and my brain is so impregnated with legal principles that even now methinks I see the resurrected skeletons of Coke and Littleton hovering above me.

Mr. Green. We—well, what's the—the result?

Mr. Sheephead. The conclusion at which I have arrived is not at all satisfactory. The law is decidedly in favor of the other side.

Mr. Green [*surprised*]. Wh—why, you to—told me yes—terday tha—that I would be—be sure to ga—gain this case.

Mr. Sheephead [*brusquely*]. Not at all, not at all, sir. You are learning to pervert facts quite early in your career. I have merely been striving to impress upon you, as a student of the law, the importance of always thinking a recovery possible, until you have positive assurance to the contrary. Now, I find upon an examination of the latest writers that you have no case whatever, hence it behooves me as an honorable attorney to advise you to abandon your suit and save the costs. An ordinary pettifogger would urge you to carry this case to court, and after you had lost it, he would demand a fee of $250. I, however, not having the moral courage to do violence to my sense of duty, advise you at once to abandon the suit, and charge you only $100 for my advice.

Mr. Green [*angrily*]. I—I'm not to—to be tri—fled with in—in this wa—way. [*Makes a motion as if to stamp his foot.*]

Mr. Sheephead. My dear boy, don't dare to stamp your foot on this floor. I have private information, from the most reliable source, that this house belongs to a row of contract houses, and the flooring is particularly flimsy. One enraged stamp of your foot might be the death of a dozen people.

Mr. Green [*angrily*]. I re—repeat, tha—that I'm not to be tri—trifled with. I—I mu—must have the—the money or the—the girl.

Mr. Sheephead. Take my advice and you shall have both. May Morose is worth $25,000. The money is invested in stocks and bonds. These investments are all sound; there's not a Virginia bond among them. Now, we propose that you should marry Miss May and abandon this suit. [*Smiling*]—You know you still love her, you rascal, you! [*Solemnly*]—And I know what love is.

Mr. Green. I—I ha—have always be—been willing to—to mar—ry her, bu—but sh—she re—refuses to marry m—me.

Mr. Sheephead. Follow me, and you shall see that she will yield, after Miss Talker's persuasion. [*He stamps his foot.*]

[*Exeunt, right door.*]

Enter MISS TALKER, MRS. MOROSE *and* MISS MAY MOROSE.

Miss Talker [*speaking while entering*]. After very serious reflection, madam, I am forced to conclude that the plaintiff, Mr. Green, is fully entitled, by law, to recover every cent of $20,000.

Mrs. Morose [*surprised*]. Did you not tell me last week that Mr. Green could not possibly recover any damages?

Miss Talker. Exactly so, madam. You see, the law is a peculiar science, and those who are uninitiated in its mysteries are apt to think that lawyers contradict themselves. But you may rest assured, madam, that my seeming inconsistencies afford the best possible evidence of the zeal and fervor, the diligence and earnestness with which I have applied myself in endeavoring to solve this legal problem. Let me explain the matter more clearly. Law is the most progressive of sciences. So rapid indeed is its development that it never stands still, not even for a day. For example, last week the authorities held, beyond all doubt, that your daughter would not be liable under the circumstances presented by this case, but upon investigating the best law reports (just issued to-day), I find that the best authorities hold that your daughter is liable.

Mrs. Morose. Well, what's to be done in the matter? She can't afford to lose her fortune for such a trifling offense.

Miss Talker. Mrs. Morose, your daughter committed a very indiscreet act, and it was with the greatest difficulty that I could come to any understanding whatever. Mr. Sheephead is well aware that he is entitled to the full amount which he seeks to recover. I resorted to every kind of finesse to dissuade him from this belief, but all to no purpose. Finally he consented to compromise the case on $12,000, provided Miss May would, in addition, consent to marry Mr. Green. Now, madam, I think that is a just and equitable arrangement. You see your daughter loses nothing by the operation, for the money is kept in the family.

Mrs. Morose. I certainly detest that fellow Green—[*meditating*], but I suppose it's more practical to have an abominable son-in-law than to lose $20,000.

Miss Talker. Unquestionably, madam. You see in receiving an objectionable son-in-law into the family, you only submit to an annoyance almost universally complained of by parents, now-a-days. Indeed, it is a thing which occurs so frequently that it will soon become the fashion in aristocratic circles. The compromise which I have effected is, I assure you, a *coup d'état* worthy of Bismarck himself.

Miss May Morose [*pertly*]. But, ma, suppose I spoil this Bismarckian stroke of diplomacy, by refusing to marry Mr. Green?

Miss Talker [*aside*]. Great goodness! we're lost! [*To Miss May Morose*]—Now, my dear young girl, you know you love this young man to distraction, you know that you have been very unhappy ever since you began to quarrel with him—[*solemnly*], and I know what it is to abuse a man whom one loves. Do not be ashamed to confess it; I heartily sympathize with you. Confide in me; tell me, do you not love him still?

Miss May M. [*very shyly*]. Well—yes.

Miss Talker. Would you marry him if you thought he was madly and desperately in love with you?

Miss May M. [*very shyly*]. Well—yes.

Miss Talker. Then you shall both be happy. I forgot, however, to mention one very important matter. You must both solemnly swear never to make any allusion to this compromise in the presence of Mr. Green, neither before nor after the marriage. Indeed, he has brooded so much over this affair that his brain has become slightly affected, and the doctor has repeatedly warned Mr. Sheephead that any allusion whatever to this suit might produce total insanity.

Mrs. Morose and Miss May M. [*solemnly*]. We swear it!

Miss May M. That's an easy task, now that the money is to remain in the family.

Enter MR. SHEEPHEAD *and* MR. GREEN. [*Right door.*]

Mr. Sheephead [*speaking while standing near the door*]. Brace up! Don't appear as though all the love was squeezed out of you! Have some sentiment about you! If you meet her looking like a lump of ice, you will be sure to extinguish [*pathetically*] the flickering flame of love still burning in her wounded breast. Don't stand there like a stick, I tell you! If I only had a galvanic battery here, I'd put some life into that lazy frame of yours.

Mr. Green [*running timidly to meet Miss May M. and embracing her*]. M—my de—dear M—May, if you'll on—only for—forgive me th—this ti—time, I—I'll ne—never su—sue you a—again.

Miss May M. And if *you* will only forgive *me* this time, I'll never promise to marry any one again.

Enter DR. BROSIUS. [*Centre door.*]

Dr. Brosius [*to Mr. Green*]. Hello! what's the meaning of this?

Miss May M. Doctor, it's all settled—we are going to be married.

Dr. Brosius [*to Mr. Green*]. I'm very glad of that, Green, for I just came to tell you that I've been seriously thinking over that little private business of ours, and while I would very much like to have testified for you, I found the stretch of conscience too great.

Mr. Sheephead. Now that our clients are happily united, let me announce [*taking Miss Talker's hand*] the engagement of their respective attorneys.

Mr. Green [*in utter amazement, to Miss Talker*]. Wh—what, are you—you go—going to—to mar—marry th—the man whom yo—you ca—called a "petti—fogu—li—lizing id—idiot"?

Miss Talker [*to Mr. Green*]. That, my dear sir, was a mere professional utterance, and like all statements made by the profession, it was not strictly true.

Mr. Green [*to Mr. Sheephead*]. An—and are you—you go—going to—to mar—ry th—the wo—woman wh—whom you ca—called a "heart—heartless bru—brute"?

Mr. Sheephead [*to Mr. Green*]. That, my dear sir, was a mere professional utterance, and like all statements made by the profession, it was not strictly true. [*Turning to the audience*]—And now, ladies and gentlemen, if you have any ante-nuptial or post-nuptial controversies, or if you wish to contract any mortgage loans, marriages, or other incumbrances, we cordially invite you, one and all, to call at the office of Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Alonzo Blunderbuss Sheephead, Attorneys-at-law, 7½ Court street, Boston, Mass. [*Curtain falls.*

FINIS.

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